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ABSTRACT

Intended for persons appointed to local advisory councils or committees and for educators and/or administrators of vocational educational or technical education, this booklet is designed to serve as a brief guide and initial source of information on local advisory councils. The first section, Overview, is a general discussion of vocational and technical education and the requirements of the 1976 legislation pertaining to councils. Other sections cover types of councils, counsel functions and activities, membership (size, qualifications, and selection/appointment), effective operation (leadership, meetings, agenda, scope of responsibility, supportive service, formalized procedures, term of membership, and liaison by designated educator), and the role of the educator in working with advisory councils. Information on other councils and a brief bibliography are also included. (HD)

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THE Little BOOK

ON

Local VOC/TEC Education Advisory Councils: A Guide

March, 1977
Columbia, S. C.

By: The South Carolina Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

This booklet is intended for persons appointed to local advisory councils or committees and for educators and/or administrators of vocational education or technical education. It is not an exhaustive, inclusive source of information on the purpose, structure, creation and operation of local advisory councils, but may serve as a brief guide and as an initial source of information on the topic. Further, it should be adopted, adapted, modified or revised by individual councils or individuals to their particular needs. Other references are also cited which would provide additional information to persons interested in the topic of advisory councils on vocational or technical education.

The State Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education which produced this guide has specified responsibilities under the federal legislation for vocational education. The State Advisory Council, however, is interested in encouraging the effective operation of local advisory councils. For additional information on the State Advisory Council, or to obtain copies of any reports issued by the State Advisory Council, call or write the office.

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OVERVIEW

This is a long tradition of involvement of local advisory groups in vocational education and also in technical education. This pattern of citizen involvement has been given new impetus recently. If it is true that "the past is but a prologue to the future," it may be helpful to be aware of the precedents in this area.

Vocational Education

Vocational education teachers at the secondary and adult level have utilized local advisory committees with varying degrees of intensity through the past three or four decades. Vocational agriculture teachers may have been among the earliest programs to successfully capture the advantages of advice from local committees. By the time of the late forties to early fifties, the concept of local advisory committees was being regularly encourgaed by state supervisory personnel and by vocational teacher education departments at the colleges. Since this was usually an option left to the individual teacher, committees were organized in some communities and not organized in other instances.

With the emergence of the first of the area vocational education centers in the mid 1960's, the competent directors of these centers almost immediately began to create curriculum advisory committees and sometimes committees concerned with the overall operation of the vocational centers. As other vocational centers were built and opened to the students, these too usually established local advisory committees, although there was no direct requirement to do so.

At the state level, the director of vocational education established a state advisory council between 1963 and 1968. Following passage of the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968, the separately created State Advisory Council on Vocational Education was appointed by the Governor, and the predecessor advisory committee was dissolved. From 1963 to 1968, there was no requirement for local advisory committees, only encouragement. From 1968 until 1977, there was no requirement for local advisory committees, but there was a stipulation in the application for federal and state funds that each school district submitted to the State Department of Education, that it be signed by the local advisory committee

representative. Moreover, some of the details for specific occupational areas in the local application requested information on local advisory committees. These actions strongly encouraged local advisory committees.

Technical Education

The technical education system was conceived in 1961, one and one-half decades ago. From the beginning, there has been active utilization of the advice of community leaders through appointment of advisory committees. Since the administrative responsibility for the overall direction of most of the centers/colleges rests with a local area commission in most instances, the emphasis has been on craft, or curriculum committees. Some institutions have also created overall advisory committees with representation from each of the craft committees.

Within the technical education system, the emphasis and priority given to maintaining useful advisory committees has tended to rise and wane, depending on the importance attached to that activity locally. In the Fall of 1976, the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education reasserted the importance of maintaining active advisory committees.

At the State level, technical education does not have an advisory committee other than the State Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education. The State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education does rely on the concept of advice from others, in that the Board's operational pattern of expanded committees brings many other persons into the decision making process.

General Comments

Vocational education, as a broad term used here to encompass vocational and technical education, has perhaps been more aggressive than any other segment of public education in utilizing advisory committees. The excellent publication produced by the American Vocational Association (AVA) in 1969 entitled *"The Advisory Committee and Vocational Education,"* contains some of the historical development and many of the reasons for use of advisory committees. Virtually all of that publication is still valid today. Regardless of the extent to which advisory committees

have been utilized in the past, even more emphasis will be placed here in the future, and in ever widening facets of education.

Committee and Council

The reader will find the words *"council"* and *"committee"* used interchangeably in the publication.

Committee used to be the preferred term, but since council is used in the new legislation, this will probably be the common term in the future.

Requirements

The 1976 legislation for vocational education will become effective in 1977, and be in force at least through 1982, unless amended prior to 1982. Among the myriad of provisions of that law (Public Law 94-482) is included the following: Section 105 -

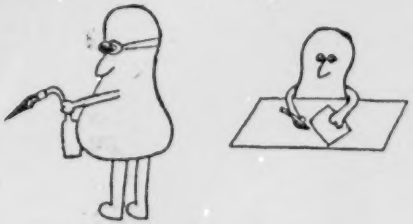
> *"(g) (1) Each eligible recipient receiving assistance under this Act to operate vocational education programs shall establish a local advisory council to provide such agency with advice on current job needs and on the relevancy of courses being offered by such agency in meeting such needs. Such local advisory councils shall be composed of members of the general public, especially of representatives of business, industry, and labor; and such local advisory councils may be established for program areas, schools, communities, or regions, whichever the recipient determines best to meet the needs of that recipient."*

This requires, for the first time, specifically that local school districts will have local advisory committees to remain eligible for federal funds for vocational education.

The State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education is also dedicated to the desirability of maintaining active advisory councils at the local level.

TYPES OF COUNCILS

While there is considerable confusion and ambiguity regarding local advisory councils, they can usually be regarded in two groups: those dealing with certain types of programs, and those concerned more broadly with institutions or school districts.



Craft or Curriculum

This is the type of advisory council which usually considers the educational program of a specific area, such as agriculture, or welding, or any other specific program. While usually the council will relate to a single program in one institution or school, it may function for a broader area - such as county-wide. A committee of this type may encompass one or more secondary programs and also be advisory to a technical institution in the same geographic area. Other titles may be used, including program committee, or a more specific title used, such as computer science council, or automotive mechanics advisory council, for example.

Institution

Some councils are constituted to proffer advice on the overall operation such as for an area vocational education center, for example. These committees would encompass the operation and needs of an institution, school, center, or district, and may be identified by any of several names. A common designation is "_____center advisory committee" but may be called a steering committee, or given some other designation.

A common arrangement is for the chairperson of each curriculum committee to be a representative to the institution committee. As chairpersons of their respective curriculum committees, they would be advisory to the teacher(s) or department. When sitting in on the institution committee, these same persons would then be advisory to the institution's administration.

The role, functions and characteristics of these two general types of committees are different, thus the necessity to clarify the types.

PURPOSE

To provide a link between the school or institution and the community that will assist the school or institution in

maintaining and improving desirable vocational or technical education programs.

This is true regardless of the type of committee, whether it is for a single teacher program or responsible to several institutions in an area. Only the functions or activities will vary according to the situation.

FUNCTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Craft or Curriculum Council

Assist Educators by -

1. Reviewing and advising on relevancy of course content
2. Advising on the adequacy of facilities and equipment
3. Assisting in obtaining available equipment
4. Arranging summer employment of teachers to up-date qualifications
5. Advising on the changing nature of job requirements in the occupational field
6. Providing plant tours and field experiences for classes or students
7. Suggesting qualified persons for teacher vacancies or as substitutes
8. Serving as substitute teachers, consultants or resource personnel
9. Evaluating programs.

Assist Students by -

1. Supporting student organizations
2. Providing training stations for cooperative work experiences
3. Assisting in student selection and in providing placement for program completers
4. Being visible and supportive to students during special events

5. Sponsoring student contest, prizes or scholarships.

Assist the Community and School by -

1. Providing objective evaluations and recommendations

2. Making such recommendations as the council sees appropriate

3. Advising on additional programs needed or closing of superflous programs

4. Providing better communications

by

a) Carrying the story of their programs to community members and political leaders

b) Serving as speakers to school, community or business groups

c) Advising their employees of the availability of programs

d) Submitting council recommendations to higher authorities

e) Encouraging community participation in special events, such as open schools, awards presentations, etc.

5. Identifying community and business/industry needs

6. Identifying information from other sources with short range impact on programs.

Institutions or Steering Committee

Assist Administrators by -

1. Advising on the overall priorities for facilities and equipment

2. Assisting in identifying sources and in helping to obtain available equipment

3. Advising on the changing nature of occupational requirements in the area

4. Providing plant tours and field experiences for students

5. Suggesting qualified persons for vacant teaching positions or for substitute teaching

6. Identifying program priorities and needs

7. Providing objective, periodic evaluations, with recommendations presented to proper authorities

8. Supporting and encouraging the administration and faculty.

Assist Educators by -

1. Assisting in providing for updating occupational competency through periodic work experience

2. Helping to plan special events

3. Serving as guest speakers or consultants.

Assist the Community by -

1. Helping to turn possible criticism into constructive advice

2. Reviewing plans for future changes or modification of programs

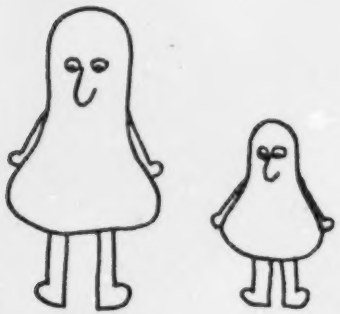
3. Providing objective evaluations and recommendations

4. Advising on programs needed or closing of superflous programs

5. Identifying community and business/industry needs

6. Encouraging community participation in special events at the institution/school

7. Contributing in other ways identified by the council.



MEMBERSHIP

1. Size

The size of the advisory council is left to the appointing authority. Consideration should be given to the functions of the committee, the size of the vocational program, and the number of groups that should be represented. Generally a craft or curriculum committee consists of 5 to 7 persons, while an institution committee may be larger. A committee above 12 to 14 persons may become less functional than smaller committees, due to group interaction characteristics.

2. Qualifications

The membership of a craft or curriculum committee should include lay people (non-educators) who possess knowledge and work experience in the program area for which they will serve. One suggestion is that the committee include employers and employees, including a recent graduate of the program area.

The membership of an institution council should also be primarily composed of non-educators, as indicated in the current legislation. Rather than representing specific occupational areas, it may be of greater value for the members of this committee to be persons of influence and respect in the community.

3. Selection - Appointment

The advisory council members for craft committees should be appointed by the administration. A majority of the members may be from nominations by the instructor or department head, but to avoid 'in-breeding', additional members nominated by the administration, board members, or from other nomination sources should be included.

The council members for institution advisory councils should be appointed by the board (if a local board exists) from nominations made by the administration. Other sources of nominations should not be overlooked, however, and these may include trade groups, business

associations, and other groups. Nominations and appointments may be made by the administration if necessary, but it will emphasize the importance of the council if appointments are made by the highest possible authority.

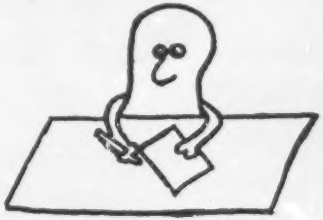
EFFECTIVE OPERATION

1. Leadership

The leadership role must be assumed by the officers of the council, especially the chairperson. The chairperson should be elected by the council members, as well as a vice chairperson, and secretary if desired. The chairperson must see that meetings are planned and called at regular intervals, that meeting agendas contain worthwhile content, and preside at meetings. The chairperson will necessarily have to work closely with school officials and will have to contribute extra time toward making the council effective.

2. Meetings

There should be a schedule of meetings planned well in advance, with reminders of the impending meeting sent to members on a timely basis. Most writers on council operation suggest a minimum of two meetings annually, with a desired pattern of about four meetings per year. Additional activities can be carried out by sub-committees of the council between meetings.



3. Agenda

An agenda should be developed and distributed to the members and other interested persons prior to the meeting date. The responsibility for the agenda rests with the chairperson, and with the educational liaison, who may be the teacher, the director, or other educator depending on the nature of the council.

4. Scope of Responsibility

The limits of responsibility for a council should be clearly stated, regardless of the type of council. The distinction between proper concerns for advice and administrative matters should be discussed and clarified as needed, at

least once annually. The council must understand that they have to leave all administrative prerogatives to those in administration.

5. Supportive Service

In the normal course of activities, there will be routine services that will be needed by the council. Typing and mailing of meeting notices, agendas, minutes of meetings and committee reports are examples of the services that need to be provided for the council. The education or institution should offer to perform these functions, and the proper contact person identified for the council. Other services, such as meeting room arrangements and details of meal functions, may also be handled by the same person.

6. Formalized Procedures

The degree of formality or informality in the operation of a council will vary with the situation and the individuals involved. In order to assure consistence of council

activities and assist in helping the council to be effective, the following elements should be formalized to some degree.

a) There should be written rules or policies and procedures for the council. These policies and procedures should be developed locally or adapted to fit the situation, and should include only the provisions necessary for efficient council operation.

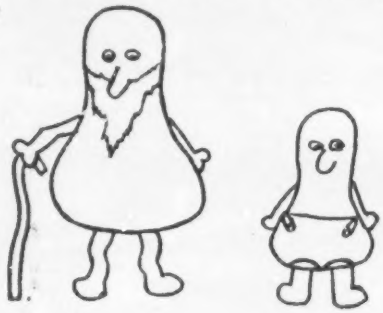
b) There should be written records of all the meetings which are prepared on a timely basis and a file maintained at a known location.

c) Any recommendations should be prepared in writing and submitted to appropriate persons or boards. These may be included in a brief annual report prepared by the committee.

7. Term of Membership

The council's policy and procedures should provide for terms of membership longer than one year, and with a systematic or staggered procedure of replacement. This

will permit the infusion of persons with new ideas and perspectives, while maintaining some continuity of thought and action.



8. Liaison by Designated Educator

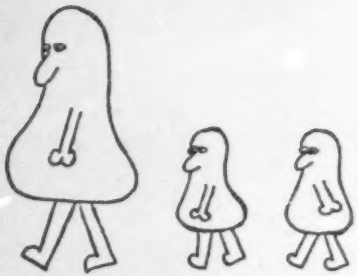
Any council composed primarily of lay persons will have to depend to a great extent on information from the educator or administrator. This may be the instructor, department head, administrator, or some other person. Both the council members and the person in education should clearly know who this person is, and the educator should be present or available at all meetings. The council should, however, provide its own leadership and not depend too heavily on the liaison person to develop the agenda or structure the discussion topics for the council.

ROLE OF THE EDUCATOR

The attitude and actions of the educator most closely associated with any advisory council is critical to the effectiveness, value, and success of the council. Unless the educator(s) truly believe in the concept of advisory councils and are willing to accept their aid, it will be difficult for the council to be effective. Conversely, the advisory council can be of extreme value when permitted and with only a nominal amount of effort. Much of the past success of vocational education has come at least in part from effective use of advisory councils. The 1969 American Vocational Association publication stated this so well when it said:

> *"The potential of advisory committees cannot be over-estimated. The members are recognized and respected specialists in their fields, and their awareness of the needs of individuals and the community affords the educator a base for instituting and maintaining realistic programs."*

To maximize the effectiveness of the council, some guides to the role of the educator may be of value.



1. **Appoint Leaders to the Council**

Nominate the best leaders you can find to the council. There is rarely any need to pick only persons who may agree with you; instead pick persons whose opinions are respected. Even outspoken critics often become supportive once they become knowledgeable of all the facts. The value of any recommendations of the council will be essentially equal to the collective respect that the community and the board have for the members of the council.

2. **Provide Accurate Information**

Always provide accurate information when necessary or requested, but refrain from efforts to overwhelm the group. Sound conclusions and recommendations can only be derived from accurate information.

3. **Be Honest and Candid**

To earn the respect of the members of the council, one should always be honest and candid with the members. Don't hesitate to lay out actual or potential problems, and neither should one hesitate to point worthwhile accomplishments. The council needs to be able to see both sides of the coin.

4. **Make the Meetings Worthwhile**

One of the best ways to encourage attendance and participation is to give the council real problems and situations to discuss. On the other hand, one of the more effective ways to discourage members is to occupy their time with trivia, or structure the meetings so that they have no sense of accomplishment. The persons who help plan the council meetings should assure that the meetings will actually solicite the input of members, and help them to see the value of the council's contributions.

5. **Expect Results**

Let the council know that they are important, that they can provide a valuable service to the programs, and that results are expected. It may be desirable to discuss this expectation as well as an accurate assessment of

their time when first discussing possible membership with an individual. This type of attitude and expectation will probably enhance, not detract from member attendance at meetings and activities.

6. Follow Through

Always follow through with any reasonable request from the council or a promise made to the council. If it is impossible or unreasonable to comply with a request, tell them so in advance, including a rationale why it would not be possible. No matter how trival, follow through on all action expected by the council.

7. Provide Supportive Services

Any council must have a minimum amount of supportive services, including arranging for meetings, typing and clerical work, and arranging other details. The details of these services should be discussed and delineated for the council, and the person or persons who will assist the council should understand this will be a part of the job description.

8. Provide Recognition for Contributions

Experience has shown that most citizens, when properly approached, are willing to take time to assist the educational programs. During the course of two or three years each active member will actually contribute considerable time and effort to an advisory council, if properly handled. It is impossible to repay the individual for their contributions with money. It is within the power of the educator to give due

recognition by other means and this should be done. Often it is possible to include the names of members in local newspapers, or have awards meetings where the members are recognized. Some educators post the names of the advisory council members prominently in the institution, or list them on newsletters or in other media. Releases to the news media on newsworthy activities can also recognize the members. Still another appropriate method appreciated by many is the awarding of a certificate of appointment, and also a certificate of appreciation of service signed and presented by the highest possible authority.

OTHER COUNCILS

State Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education

The South Carolina State Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education (SACVTE) was established in 1969 as specified in the Vocational Amendments of 1968 (P.L.90-576), which stated:

> *Any State which desires to receive a grant under this title for any fiscal year shall establish a State Advisory Council, which shall be appointed by the Governor.*

More recent federal legislation, the Education Amendments of 1976 (P.L.94-482) continued and expanded the role of the State Advisory Council. This Act states:

> *Any State which desires to participate in programs under this Act for any fiscal year shall establish a State Advisory Council which shall be appointed by the Governor.*

The State Advisory Council currently consists of fifteen (15) members who comprise this citizens advisory group.

Under the provisions of P.L.94-482, the membership will be increased during 1977 to twenty (20) or more members to represent all of the categories of membership. The members... serve three year terms of appointment, and give unselfishly of their time to fulfill their advisory responsibilities to the State Board for Vocational Education (State Board of Education) and to the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education.

The Council functions as a separate state agency under an executive order from the Governor, and maintains an office for the Council in Columbia. Funds are provided by Congress for the operation of the State Council.

The responsibilities of the Council under P.L.94-482 include those followed from 1969 to 1977, with additional duties. Briefly summarized, these duties are to:

Advise – The State Board in the development of the five year plan.
– The State Board on policy matters arising out of the administration of programs.

Evaluate – Vocational education programs, services and activities.
– Prepare an annual evaluation report.

Publish – The results of evaluation.

Identify – Vocational education and employment and training needs of the State.

Comment – On the reports of the State Manpower Services Council.

Recommend – Such changes in vocational education, including technical education, programs, services and activities as may deamed necessary.

Provide Technical Assistance – Make available such technical assistance as local educational agencies may request to establish and operate local advisory councils.

Hold Public Meetings – Hold not less than one public meeting each year at which the public is given an opportunity to express views concerning vocational education.

8: 19

Advisory To:

According to the federal legislation which created and maintains the State Advisory Council, it is to be advisory to the State Board for Vocational Education, which is the State Board of Education. Vocational education in the context used in the legislation is a broad term that encompasses secondary, post-secondary, and adult vocational education. The responsibility for these areas is carried in South Carolina by two agencies: The State Board of Education, and the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (TEC). Under this administrative arrangement, and by preferences of the Governor, the State Advisory Council on Vocational and Technical Education is advisory to both boards, and deals with the two boards on an equal basis.

The South Carolina State Advisory Council functions under a pattern of regular scheduled meetings, and by committee meetings and activity between meeting dates. There are usually six regular meetings each year. Committee meetings are called when necessary.

While it functions as a separate state agency, the unique distinction between the council and any other agency is in the operation of the group. The typical board for any state agency sets broad policy, and the agency employees carry out the administration and work of the agency. The State Advisory Council, however, functions as a working council. The reports, recommendations, and other output is the direct result of the collective judgement and involvement of the members. It is the work and value judgements of the members, not the staff, that primarily guide the actions of the council.

National Advisory Council on Vocational Education

The federal legislation for vocational education in 1968 also established a National Advisory Council on Vocational Education. This National Advisory Council consisted of twenty-one (21) members, appointed by the President of the United States, who were advisory to the Secretary of Education, and to the U.S. Congress.

The 1976 act (P.L.94-482) extended the National Advisory Council in Section 162, and added to the responsibilities of that Council.

The National Advisory Council and the State Advisory Councils have maintained close relationships and good communications from the beginning. Regulations specify that the annual reports of the State Advisory Councils be forwarded to the National Advisory Council, as well as to the U.S. Commissioner of Education. This is expected to continue for the duration of P.L.94-482. In addition, the National Advisory Council and representatives of the State Advisory

Councils have met annually, or more frequently as needed. The National Advisory Council now also has authority to provide technical assistance to State Councils. All of this provides a mechanism for assuring that common concerns and problems at the local and state level can be known at the national level.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The following list is a brief selected bibliography on the same topic that may be useful.

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